

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-05 OC-06 CCO-00

EB-08 L-03 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 PRS-01 INR-07

INRE-00 SSO-00 /074 W

-----058524 241619Z /44-S

O 241330Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8978

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 1549

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, CT, US, PFOR

SUBJ: DETENTION OF WESTERN JOURNALIST

REF: BANGUI 1544

JULY 24. REQUEST LONDON SHARE IT WITH FCO.

1. BRITISH CONSUL PRINCE ARRIVED 1600 LOCAL JULY 23, WITH AMERICAN EMBASSY NEVER HAVING RECEIVED RESPONSE TO ITS REQUEST FOR OVER-FLIGHT AND LANDING CLEARANCE. PRINCE IMMEDIATELY TRIED TO SEE THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE, MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND FINALLY SUCCEEDED IN MAKING AN APPOINTMENT MONDAY MORNING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

2. POLICE QUESTIONED PILOT AT HOTEL SATURDAY EVENING CONCERNING UNAUTHORIZED LANDING. PILOT GAVE THEM COPY OF TELEX FROM BRITISH EMBASSY IN YAOUNDE TO BRITISH CONSULATE IN DOUALA (WHO WAS ORGANIZING CHARTER) READING AS FOLLOWS: "AUTHORIZATION NUMBER STILL NOT THROUGH BUT ASSURED BY US EMBASSY THAT THEY ARE WAITING FOR IT AND THAT IT IS NO PROBLEM. WILL PLAN TAKE OFF ON THIS BASIS?" WHEN PRINCE RETURNED TO HOTEL POLICE QUESTIONED HIM ALSO.
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HE SAID HE KNEW GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INFORMED OF DETAILS OF FLIGHT AND WHEN PERMISSION GIVEN TO LAND HE ASSUMED THAT ALL WAS WELL; OTHERWISE HE HAD BEEN PREPARED TO TURN BACK. POLICE AT FIRST TOLD PRINCE AND PILOT THEY WERE RESTRICTED TO HOTEL, BUT RETURNED LATER TO SAY EVERYTHING WAS ALL RIGHT.

3. CHARGE WAS CALLED TO MEET WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER MORNING OF JULY 24. MINISTER PRESENTED CHARGE WITH TELEX CITED ABOVE

AND ASKED IF AMERICAN EMBASSY HAD SENT IT. (TELEX SHOWED NO SENDER OR ADDRESSEE). CHARGE SAID EMBASSY HAD NOT SENT IT. AS FOREIGN MINISTER KNEW, EMBASSY HAD REQUESTED OVERFLIGHT AND LANDING CLEARANCE BY LETTER WHICH THE CHARGE HAD GIVEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER THE MORNING OF JULY 23. THE CHARGE SAID HE HAD REPORTED TO WASHINGTON, LONDON AND YAOUNDE THE DELIVERY OF THAT REQUEST AND HAD SAID THAT A RESPONSE WAS USUALLY RECEIVED IN A FEW HOURS IN SUCH CASES. (PARA 2 REFTEL). THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS SURPRISED. HE APPARENTLY EXPECTED TO CONFRONT THE CHARGE WITH FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE EMBASSY'S MALFEASANCE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED IF ANYONE HAD CALLED TO SAY AUTHORIZATION WAS DENIED. THE CHARGE RESPONDED NO. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THE LANDING WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION WAS SERIOUS. THE PLANE WAS IN BANGUI ILLEGALLY. THE ASKED THE CHARGE TO SEND A DIPLOMATIC NOTE DESCRIBING WHAT HE HAD SAID IN HIS MESSAGE. THE CHARGE SAID HE BELIEVED THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, BUT SINCE THE EMBASSY MESSAGE (REFTEL) HAD BEEN IN CODE, HE WOULD HAVE TO GET THE DEPARTMENT'S AUTHORIZATION.

4. THE CHARGE ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT ANOTHER JOURNALIST, AMERICAN, HAD VISITED THE CAE THE WEEK BEFORE THE VISIT OF RANDAL AND GOLDSMITH. IN THAT CASE, THE EMBASSY HAD ADVISED THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND THE PRESS SPOKESMAN FOR THE IMPERIAL COURT IN ADVANCE; NOBODY HAD SAID ANYTHING ABOUT THE LAW REQUIRING REGISTRATION WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

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POLICE. THE AMERICAN JOURNALIST (DENNIS LAMB) HAD VISITED AND LEFT, SO NATURALLY THE EMBASSY DID NOT THINK OF THE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT WHEN RANDAL AND GOLDSMITH CAME.

5. IN PARTING, THE CHARGE SOUGHT TO CONFIRM PRINCE'S APPOINTMENT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID PRINCE SHOULD WAIT AT HOTEL UNTIL PROTOCOL CONTACTED HIM.

6. COMMENT: IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE CAE IS OBJECTING TO THE UNAUTHORIZED LANDING BECAUSE OF ITS SENSIBILITIES OR BECAUSE IT DID NOT WANT THE BRITISH CONSUL TO VISIT. THE LATTER MAY BE POSPECTS WE HAVE HEARD THE OPINION FROM TWO INDEPENDENT SOURCES THAT THE CAE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO USE GOLDSMITH TO BLACKMAIL MORE MONEY OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA. AP PARIS INFORMS US BASIS FOR "SOUTH AFRICAN CONNECTION" MAY BE THAT GOLDSMITH WAS APPARENTLY UNABLE TO GET THROUGH TO AP PARIS AND THEREFORE TELEXED HIS STORY TO AP JOHANNESBURG BUREAU FROM BANGUI.

7. FOR DEPT: WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENT FOR CAE REQUEST FOR WRITTEN REPORT ON EMBASSY'S MESSAGE ABOUT OVERFLIGHT AND LANDING AUTHORIZATION. WE DO NOT SEE ANYTHING WRONG WITH GIVING SUBSTANCE OF MESSAGE. HOWEVER, CHARGE DID NOT TELL FOREIGN MINISTER AND WILL NOT MENTION THAT BULK OF TRAFFIC ON PRINCE'S

FLIGHT WAS HANDLED BY E AND E RADIO DIRECTLY WITH YAOUNDE. IN THOSE MESSAGES, BANGUI URGED PRINCE TO COME BY SCHEDULED FLIGHT FROM NDJAMENA JULY 24 SINCE HE PROBABLY WASN'T GOING TO SEE ANYONE UNTIL MONDAY. YAOUNDE ASKED IF AIRCRAFT COULD COME WITHOUT PERMISSION. BANGUI SAID IN SUBSTANCE THAT IN THE PAST AIRCRAFT HAD LANDED WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION WITHOUT ILL EFFECTS, BUT THAT DECISION WOULD HAVE TO BE PILOT'S. YAOUNDE INFORMED US ABOUT 1400 LOCAL THAT AIRCRAFT HAD TAKEN OFF WITHOUT WAITING FOR AUTHORIZATION. INTERESTINGLY, WHEN AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICER CHECKED WITH THE TOWER BEFORE THE PLANE LANDED, HE WAS TOLD THAT EVERYTHING WAS IN ORDER.

8. FOR FCO FROM PRINCE: PLEASE STATE GOLDSMITH'S BASIS OF UK
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CITIZENSHIP AND PASSPORT DETAILS.
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Message Attributes

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